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## Landmine Detonates on South Korean Side of Demilitarized Zone

News Brief

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## Landmine Detonates on South Korean Side of Demilitarized Zone

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Tensions between North Korea and South Korea rose as a result of the first major exchange of artillery fire in five years.<sup>1</sup> On 4 August 2015, a landmine severely wounded two South Korean staff sergeants patrolling the DMZ.<sup>2</sup> Officials from Seoul accused North Korea of planting three mines near the guard post on the south side of the DMZ, 440 meters (481 yards) away from the demarcation line; officials from Pyongyang denied these accusations.<sup>3</sup> The explosives found were placed in wooden boxes, not unlike mines previously used by North Korea.<sup>3</sup>

South Korea responded to the incident with loudspeakers broadcasting propaganda across the border, a Cold War tactic not used in over a decade.<sup>1</sup> The loudspeakers broadcasted pro-democratic content, the weather and world news.<sup>4</sup> Pyongyang threatened severe and imminent retaliation should South Korean loudspeakers continue broadcasting, and increased their country's military alert to a "semi-war state."<sup>1</sup>

On 20 August 2015, North Korea fired rockets in the general direction of the loudspeakers, and exchanged artillery fire across the border with soldiers from South Korea.<sup>1</sup> During these events, the South Korean government asked the citizens in neighboring towns to evacuate the area due to "a danger of bombing."<sup>4</sup>

Officials from both countries met on 22–23 August 2015 and discussed resolving the current situation and furthering positive country relations.<sup>4</sup> On 24 August 2015, the opposing sides agreed on a truce; Pyongyang stated "regret" for the landmine explosion and lowered its defense status, and Seoul agreed to cease using their loudspeakers on the DMZ.<sup>5</sup> The status of landmines in the DMZ was not part of the truce agreement. 

~ Heather Funkhouser, CISR staff

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## Endnotes

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